

Public Comments Submitted to the Boston Region MPO

February 18, 2021

Written comments were submitted for the following projects:

- **Bellingham:** Rehabilitation and Related Work on Route 126, from Douglas Drive to Route 140 (#608887) (Programmed in FFY 2022)
- **Belmont:** Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1) (#609204) (Scored for FFYs 2022—26 TIP)
- **Ipswich:** Roadway Improvements on County Street Including Rehabilitation of Bridge I-01-005 (#611975) (Scored for FFYs 2022—26 TIP)
- **Peabody:** Independence Greenway, multiple segments (#609211 and #610544) (Programmed in FFYs 2024 and 2025, respectively)

Bellingham (#608887): Rehabilitation and Related Work on Route 126, from Douglas Drive to Route 140

February 3, 2021

David Mohler
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Chairman Mohler,

If I may, I would like to offer written comment in support of the Town of Bellingham's FY22 TIP project, project number 608887, South Main Street (Route 126) from Douglas Drive to Mechanic Street Reconstruction.

The project is on time and has had only slight plan changes, stemming from MassDOT comments, that have adjusted the overall cost. The Town of Bellingham is currently moving forward and addressing the 100% design comments from MassDOT. Given that we are steps away from completion of the design the Town has placed an article on the May Annual Town Meeting Warrant for Right of Way acquisition. At this time the Town of Bellingham anticipates a bid date scheduled for December 4, 2021 and we intend to meet that targeted date.

The Town of Bellingham is extremely excited to complete this project. It will be a great improvement to the central corridor of Bellingham and I would like to take a moment to thank the entire MPO Board and Staff for making this process a smooth, rather precise process with excellent communication along the way.

Thank you,
Jim Kupfer

James S. Kupfer, MPA, AICP
Town Planner/ Zoning Compliance Officer
10 Mechanic Street
Bellingham, MA 02019
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jkupfer@bellinghamma.org

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 4, 2021

Dear Mr. Genova,

I am totally opposed to the proposed bike path along the Belmont/Cambridge line. As a resident and taxpayer in Belmont for almost 30 years I have recently started to express my views as to how money is managed in Belmont. I am also concerned about the safety of bike riders as well as drivers. Belmont is a small town and we have a lot of traffic. Why complicate things? Are there really that many bike riders in this town? In Cambridge? Let's think about the overall common good - what is being comprised? Can our funds be put to better use? I believe so!

I would appreciate a reply at your convenience. Thank you.

Regards,
Dyanne Cleary
38 Staunton Road
Belmont, MA 02478

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 4, 2021

Hi Matt,

I understand you can hear or forward my comments for the MPO Board meeting.

I would like to make my voice heard to oppose the Community Path in its current format. My family and I bike and use the Arlington to Bedford rail trail from our home in Belmont Center, which we access via Channing Road. Channing Road is a quiet street that ends up virtually at the end of the current path that connects to Fresh Pond. The current design adds complexity that is not necessary. A solution needs to be found that abutters and people that live in town can agree on.

Best regards,

Sean Greenhow
51 Alexander Ave, Belmont

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 4, 2021

Yes, so I have a concern that we have NO money (ZERO) for all sorts of projects like this, in addition to safety and all the other stuff mentioned below.

Thank you,
Marko Labudovic
61 Carleton Rd
Belmont, MA 02478

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Subject: IMPORTANT! MPO PUBLIC COMMENT OPEN

Dear Neighbors,

Please send an email to Matt Genova at the MPO with concerns you feel have not been adequately addressed by the current path committee.

Matt's committee, is the one that approves the TIP funding for paths. There is already some concern about the amount of money that this path is going to cost, safety is another issue they look at. As you know the path will be crossing extremely close the train at Brighton Street' something they have not physically seen.

Members of the path committee still don't know how the path is going to connect at the west end, they still have not spoken to the land owners at either of east and west access points about using their property, and they still don't have approval for the tunnel, should they be submitting the 25% design plans to be considered for funding?

The fact that they continue to shut abutters out, tell us one thing then do another, should be concerns as well.

Your emails can be brief, but please this is the time to send him something, please share with others the more the better.

Thanks,
Cindy

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 4, 2021

Dear MPO,

There was a statement made in the past that the MBTA would not favorably bless the southern route option to MassDot for funding because of safety concerns crossing the tracks. While crossing the track was and always will be a concern, the extremely close proximity of a path next to an active commuter rail line should give reason for pause.

I ask that you take into consideration some things that may not have been brought to your attention.

On the south side: the expanded \$300M high school and it's accompanying infrastructure, the density of housing to the south, and the Cambridge Quad development to the east housing 10K.

If the path is on the north side of the tracks, these people will also need to cross the tracks from south to north.

And if the path were to be on the north side the preferred route by bike "commuters" and the more expensive of the route options, bikers would not be able to just "ride" thru Brighton Street, they'd have to get off their bike or risk being struck by a car, hence the gate conversation.

Introducing pedestrians, and bikers to a heavily traffic area next to an active commuter rail a very short distance away from the bike crossing still seems like a bad idea, especially when a safer alternative could be a short distance away. One really needs to see this crossing at peak hours to gain a real understanding of the situation.

Additionally because there are still so many obstacles, it is still unknown how the path will connect at the west end into Waltham, shouldn't that be worked out before any money is allocated for this project? The continuation could become impossible and the path could become dead in its track (no pun intended!)

The land owners at the east and west access points, where easements will be necessary, still have not had any conversations with committee members, town officials, or Nitsch representatives as to how the path will impact their property, and if they will be taking land by eminent domain as discussed in a recent meeting.

The path committee continues to ignore abutters, and issues that were brought to their attention still have not been mitigated. Attempts to have an abutter representative on the committee have been thwarted, and very little information is shared. Abutters are not asked, but told what is going to happen, we continue to try to protect the integrity of our neighborhood, get information, and be part of a project that will affect us forever.

Thanks for your time,
Cindy Taylor
Channing Road

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 4, 2021

Hello Matt,

I am a long time resident of the town of Belmont, and I am very concerned about the proposed community path along the railroad tracks in Belmont. My primary concern is a safety issue. In the more than 50 years that I have lived in Belmont, I have seen and heard of several instances of people being killed by trains along this proposed route. I know that fences, tunnels and other safety measures have been proposed, but I also know that these measures will not prevent people, especially children, from crossing the tracks. The path along this route will only encourage more activity along the tracks, and eventually, someone will be killed. I live in the Winnbrook section of Belmont, and while I am not an abutter of the proposed path, I live close enough to have heard the train whistle blow loudly and repeatedly, the train screech to a halt, and then the sound of the sirens from the Police and Fire engines. When you hear that noise, you know what happened. You don't have to wait to read about it in the paper the next day. Please consider this safety concern when making your decision.

I would also suggest that you try standing next to the tracks along the proposed route some day while a train passes by. Walking or riding along this path will not be the leisurely, peaceful or tranquil experience that is being marketed to the town.

Thank you,
Stephen Trischitta

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 5, 2021

Hello Matt,

I just want to briefly share our concerns regarding the proposed bike path.

We've lived in Belmont for over 30 years and for better or worse, know the town and it's politics quite well.

While the bike path idea in theory is good relative to exercise and fresh air, the location and financial timing is not. To spend millions on a luxury item (yes, I view this as a nice to have) is not financially responsible nor feasible at this time.

While the picture painted in Belmont about Belmont is lovely and viewed as a premier town, filled with wealthy, successful CEO's, is an abstract painting at best. There are a lot of residents who are earning a living with moderate jobs; many residents are retired or widowed and yes, we have single parents raising their children here alone.

All of these good, hard-working people are expected to pay the ever-increasing tax bill along with supporting their families. More residents than you may think, are barely getting by.

Courtesy of the Covid-19 atrocity this past year, residents have lost jobs, have been furloughed and/or faced salary reductions. Countless parents are frustrated with the lack of commitment from our teachers to return to the classrooms. All of these factors have significant physical, emotional and financial ramifications on our residents and their families.

Yes, it's a nice town but we have our issues too; we just don't share them openly and publish our problems as many neighboring towns do.

Thank you for your time. We are vehemently against spending any more tax payer money at this time.

Nancy and George Sarris
Hough Road

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 7, 2021

Hello Matt,

I am a long time resident of the town of Belmont, I am against the development of a community bike path in Belmont. In my opinion the location of the path being next to the commuter rail is very unwise and lacking common sense. Those trains are traveling at such a high rate of speed that I am confident people will be killed. I understand that the people who want this path are looking for a quick and uninterrupted method of getting into Boston, forfeiting safety is foolish. Over the years I have ridden my horse on a regular basis in the woods abutting Walden Pond the woods (called Fairhaven) are separated by the railroad tracks and in a couple of spots the trail is approximately 15 feet away from the tracks and there is no way you want to be that close to the speeding train on a bike. Also, this proposal requires several abutters to provide access (by easement) to their land. I don't believe the Community Path Group has even asked the abutters if they are willing to allow for an easement to their property. I am not sure if the property owners want a "Community" path behind their homes, I certainly wouldn't. I don't believe the Group plans on offering any financial compensation for the use/transfer of ownership, I would expect to be compensated financially. This town and all surrounding towns have made accommodations for the bike commuters and they don't seem to be satisfied. There are a lot of people from other towns who have come to Belmont and are asking for us as Belmont residents to foot the bill for this path. I think they should put a lot of their own funds into accomplish this goal. They should raise funds privately. Perhaps a GO FUND ME PAGE.

Regards,

Colleen Carney
Resident of the Town of Belmont

M.Aleida Leza
Darin Takemoto
91 Channing Road
Belmont, MA

Mr. Matt Genova
TIP Manager

February 7, 2021

Dear Mr. Genova,

In several past occasions, I have submitted public comments or contacted you with complaints about the way in that we, abutters of the Belmont Community Path (project ##609204), have been and are being treated by the town during its planning. Now, again, I am submitting this public comment about the process. The state makes available millions worth of funds and it should be aware that it may take be taken as an opportunity for greed and abuse of the vulnerable, less moneyed people such as myself, my husband and our neighbors.

PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITIES

July-August, 2019 was approximately the time period in which the Nitsch engineering firm's proposal was reviewed and accepted by the CPPC, the committee in charge of implementing project #609204. Although Selectman Roy Epstein's appointment to the CPPC had lapsed on June 30, 2019, he continued to form quorums and to cast votes. When Selectman Epstein sought to be reappointed (August 12th) to the CPPC by the Select Board, my husband and I were the only public left that night. Eyeing us, Selectman/Attorney Dash refused to reappoint R.E. despite his insistence stating that: 1) being both a Selectman and a CPPC voting member constituted conflict of interest; 2) it was not lawful for Selectman Epstein to vote for his own reappointment. To that list, I would like to add that it was 3) highly irregular to knowingly act as a bona fide CPPC voting member after the end of his appointment and that, in my opinion, it puts into question the business transacted during those meetings.

It was Selectman Epstein that made several, stunning statements during a phone conversation. I had called to ask him why alternative routes shown in Pare's feasibility study were not chosen instead of the North route that includes BCF's narrow, forested strip of land that abuts our back fences. Before calling Epstein, I had called and discussed the matter with Amy Archer (author of the Pare feasibility study) and when I asked her what would be a suitable alternative to the North route from Alexander to Belmont Center, she quickly answered: "Concord Ave." and then explained that she had had to discard that route because it required traffic lights at the Concord/Common St. intersection and that the town refused to consider it without giving her an explanation. Now when I brought up alternate routes, Epstein became agitated on the phone and shouted at me words to the effect that **Pare should have never come up with alternatives to the North route, that the only acceptable route was the BCF land.** He shouted "It has to be BCF land!" repeating it several times so there was no chance for misunderstanding the words that suggest that there is more at work here that building a fair and just "community" path. (I have wondered whether this is partly the reason why Pare was replaced by Nitsch.)

The BCF is a local organization that seems to have been formed by a local real estate attorney. A BCF member has been steering this project through to completion for years as a member of the various town committees in charge of it. The BCF land, which consists of the RR embankment and an old B&M RR bed, started quickly appreciating in value around the same

time that this project starting picking up speed in 2012 (a fact that I learned recently from CPPC Chairman and MA state attorney Russ Leino). BCF land value went from \$50K in 2012 to \$148K in 2013. By 2017, it was \$196K and described as not being landlocked, as having a sidewalk and an “average” view(!!) Unlike my home, it is not described as having “excessive noise”. I haven’t kept track beyond 2017 because there is obvious value inflation happening.

Returning to the matter of a South route (Brighton to Belmont Center) that includes the Concord Ave. option: a bit of the land is public land and this route would not impact the well-being of ~ 70 families along Channing Rd. It is easy and inexpensive to build but I must conclude that “inexpensive” may be precisely the reason why it was not chosen.

BUDGET INFLATION AND FAVORITISM

1. Holding up Highway 60. Originally, Nitsch planned the construction of a long and, in places, ~20’ tall retaining wall along one section of the project. CPPC members were particularly appalled by this “Great Wall of Belmont” as it was quickly nicknamed. There was concern about graffiti but also about aesthetics. As I gathered from the discussion, the aesthetic concern was, in part, because it - what was deemed an unsightly wall - would be clearly visible from the nearby home of one of the CPPC/BCF member.

The end result was that the Great Wall of Belmont was eliminated. Its replacement was a retaining wall designed to run alongside a section of Highway 60 to “hold it up”. Because it is holding up the highway, this retaining wall requires the sinking of steel pylons and seizing part of a homeowner’s property, 722 Pleasant St.

Besides causing greater disturbance to a homeowner and possible damage to the home seemingly just for the sake of a pretty view from someone else’s front door, I would not be surprised if this steel pylon-anchored retaining wall is more costly than the Great Wall of Belmont considering the drive by the CPPC/BCF dual member to inflate the project’s budget,

2. Lights. At one meeting, Engineer Michalak mentioned that the project budget was \$20M at that point and added that, if the CPPC wanted lighting, it would be an additional \$4M. It was alarming because lights would increase the budget, the obsessive goal of CPPC/BCF member in particular so it meant that abutters would be at the losing end on this too. We have resisted having this path/park lighted all night: we already live with field lights (football and softball fields), lights from the RR, lights from a sun-roofed skating rink and flood lights in nearby buildings. We have presented a scientific report about the negative effect of light on humans prepared by Harvard Professor J. Whitely. The CPPC has responded by never addressing the issue with us.

Recently, Nitsch sent the CPPC a plan that showed a mysterious dashed red line running alongside the path. I called town engineering staff to inquire about the meaning of this symbol but, of course, my voicemail went unanswered (once in a while I approach the staff to have further proof of their stonewalling). So I researched it and found that the red dashed line indicated an underground electrical cable. Armed with that knowledge, I examined the red line and noticed that, on the Highway 60 side, every so often, it jogs briefly to the North side of landscape trees suggesting that the light poles would not be visible from the aforementioned CPPC/BCF member’s nearby home. So for some, it seems that there is care not to offend aesthetic sensibilities while we are to live with more health-damaging lighting and unsightly light poles among many other damaging issues.

3. To jack or not to jack. It was surprising that the Nitsch proposal consisted mainly of touting tunnel jacking. There was no mention of multi-user path design experience. Tunnel jacking seemed a very harsh method liable to damage neighboring houses and to impact us because

of the ground pounding for weeks that it entails. At the start of the relationship with Nitsch, Nitsch pushed for tunnel jacking and the CPPC pushed back with one member stating that it was more expensive thus the CPPC preferred cut-and-cover. Reality was set on its head, when at a following meeting, Michalak stated that Nitsch would proceed with tunnel jacking and that it was the CPPC's preference and that Nitsch would just follow orders! In other words, Nitsch would just be making the client happy.

I called Pare engineer Amy Archer and discussed with her tunnel jacking vs cut-and-cover. In her opinion, cut-and-cover was best for this project: no likely damage to neighboring homes and it could be done over a weekend instead of weeks. It was inexpensive in contrast to tunnel jacking.

Months after talking to Engineer Archer, Michalak explained that there was a **need** for tunnel jacking because it was the MBTA's preference and implied it was basically a MBTA demand! I have not confirmed this with the MBTA but I hope the MPO may do so. But by this point tunnel jacking had switched from being Nitsch's preference, to the CPPC and now to the MBTA!

4. More trees less asphalt! That was the heartfelt cry of the CPPC when they saw that the Belmont Station plan meant that ~13-14 trees i.e. the majority of trees there would be cut and replaced by asphalt strips. This is the main reason that the CPPC has not found a satisfactory plan for this section. They have agonized over it desiring to preserve "green space".

However, the CPPC seems callous and hypocritical when it comes to our green space: the trees growing in our backyards and in the embankment that we treasure because of the birds and wildlife that inhabit them and because these trees soften the unsightly view of field lights, RR tracks and other structures. Originally, the CPPC plan called for cutting down the trees along the entire 3/4 mile length of Channing Rd. Months ago, the CPPC said it would cut all but "select trees". But that may mean that all but 2 or a few trees may be cut! We will lose our "green space" and see its replacement with an unsightly 12' wide asphalt road. So for us, the CPPC is planning "More asphalt, less trees!"

Incidentally: a Keolis agent has been heavily spraying herbicide on the BCF embankment trees for several years now. Keolis wrongly insists that the BCF land is MBTA property. Many are dead or dying; this spraying is eliminating one of our objections to this project. It is a sad sight and a danger to us all.

SILENCE, EVASION, OBSCURING

The CPPC and the preceding committees all have proven quite adept at stonewalling and evading. Here are some examples chosen from a plethora of them.

1. Until recently, public meeting notices have been routinely posted at the minimum time allowed by the Open Meeting Laws i.e. exactly 48 hrs prior to a meeting even if the CPPC scheduled the meeting several weeks in advance. To combat this evasive maneuvering, I have had to attend every single CPPC meeting for ~3 years.

2. Scheduling public meetings to discourage public attendance such as the one between Nitsch - CPPC and abutters. The meeting was scheduled for 8 am on a frigid (30° F) Saturday in November 2019. Thanks to Nitsch who balked at the 8 am weekend hour we met at 9 am near a busy intersection in Belmont Center. While abutters huddled on the sidewalk, a Nitsch representative gave a very general and rosy view of the project and then proceeded to deflect/evade questions. This was followed by a useless, cold-numbing walk down Channing Rd.

This type of CPPC evasion was again displayed at the meeting this past Wednesday (Feb 3rd). The CPPC has decided to make a field visit jointly with Nitsch because of the members' inability to find a satisfactory Belmont Station design plan. Not surprisingly - since I have witnessed this before - a member suggested meeting at 8 am to specifically discourage public attendance (I think this member may have also proposed a weekend morning.). Later, this member called it a "joke" which indeed it is an appropriate term for our frigid November sidewalk meeting.

3. The town staff that liaisons with the CPPC is adept at not answering emails or voicemails. I learned that when, after initially supporting this project, I started opposing it. The attitude of the staff went from helpful to ignoring any request or question I made so I have stopped approaching the staff for a few years now.

4. The 2020 public engagement meeting was scheduled to simply be a Nitsch presentation with no possibility of the public to ask questions or make comments. Abutters protested and it was changed to a presentation with a Q&A. We requested being able to examine the plan before the presentation to know what questions to ask and that our comments be posted for all to read.

Nitsch posted unreadable ~2.5" x 3" vector images of engineering s that my husband succeeded in expanding and compiling into a PDF for distribution to other abutters. Then I had to attempt deciphering the engineering symbols and pass whatever knowledge I could glean to fellow abutters.

The public comments were submitted in a Nitsch-run server. Our objections to a process that was not transparent were ignored: using a private server could lead to the disappearance of comments critical of the project and we asked that all comments be published. Indeed, when Nitsch presented its tabulation of the comments, abutters' concerns about **lighting, drainage, privacy, safety, noise, loitering and litter** were seemingly reduced to one "drainage" comment listed under "Miscellaneous". So as far as the world is concerned, based on the data released by Nitsch/CPPC, the comments were favorable except for a few outliers. Nitsch has also ignored repeated requests to publish responses to the public comments, despite promising several times to do so.

5. At CPPC public meetings, I have had to keep my hand up for as long as 20 minutes to ask a question. Frequently, I have been told that there is no time for me to ask a question while, at the same time, allowing pro-project people to participate without even having to raise the hand. Now that we have switched to Zoom, knowing that raising my hand is useless, one day I simply made a Chat comment. Chat was immediately disabled and has been disabled in most meetings after that occasion.

6. The CPPC is planning to use a large portion of a private property's land. This property extends very close to the RR tracks and without the land between the building's back wall to its property line, there is no passage through to the Pleasant St/Highway 60 side. Another narrow section of land from the building's side wall to the property line will be used as an access path from Belmont Center. To arrange a meeting with the owner, the police chief provided the owner's private telephone number at the town administrator's request. The town administrator arranged for a meeting and, in discussion with the CPPC, it was decided that the owner would be told that the submission of the 25% design plan was a mere "formality" and that the submittal was just a form to keep the town's ball rolling with the MPO; that the plan as submitted would be amenable to change so the owner could still change his mind after submission. Based on what a MassDOT engineer explained to me this would be described charitably as misleading.

IGNORING OUR CONCERNS

To conclude, I will list additional concerns as abutters. I will be brief since we have brought these concerns to your attention and to the attention of MassDOT Engineer Michael Trepanier in past letters.

1. Drainage. As engineers, you understand the water displacement problems caused by a compacted and asphalted 12' wide road that sits ~10' above many of our properties. It should also be obvious that an 8" perforated pipe is meant to keep this path clear of water and ice but it will immediately leach the water on our low laying backyards as it moves into the pipe unless the water flow is so huge that it can not exit it as fast as it enters.

2. Salt and snow. Salt to keep this road clear in the winter will inevitably kill the vegetation including our trees and other plants. It is evident that salt dissolves in water and it will diffuse throughout the soil and it will be washed down to our backyards. Snow clearing of the land means snow being pushed onto us: it can not be thrown onto the RR tracks and there will be little room except for snowblowing it into our backyards.

3. Lights. Artificial, night lighting is harmful to **all** life forms, both humans and wild life. It is a major concern and I have already addressed this issue in previous letters to you including a letter sent jointly with Professor Whited.

4. Privacy and safety. This path is expected to attract ~1000 people pre-Covid and it is likely to attract quite a few more post-Covid. It is meant for year round and 24 hr. use. Reading reports about the effect of linear parks such as these indicates that we will live with increased noise, loitering and littering. Since parks are acknowledged "crime generators", we will also have to live with increased crime.

Thank you for taking the time to read this lengthy letter. But we must speak up now to defend our home, help our more vulnerable neighbors and protect the trees and creatures that we love.

Sincerely,

Aleida Leza
Darin Takemoto

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 7, 2021

Dear Mr. Genova,

I am Naomi Okugawa, a resident of 722 Pleasant Street in the town of Belmont. I am writing to you to share my feelings about the Belmont Community Path Project. I am sorry in advance for my lengthy message, but the town of Belmont and the Belmont Community Path Project made us miserable and hopeless, also made us feel nothing and valueless. Our fellow abutter told us that reaching out to you would be our last opportunity to be heard.

Our house will be tremendously affected by the community path in negative ways. We do not like the idea of having a bike path in our backyard, but we have been trying to stay positive and tried to engage with the community path committee and the town of Belmont, but they do not really listen to affected abutters and keep ignoring our opinions. They are extremely hard to work with and keep failing to inform affected abutters and provide the necessary information.

In late 2019, for the first time we had noticed the Belmont Community Path Project by a flyer posted three days before the abutter walkthrough which did not include our Pleasant Street section. In early 2020, we were able to find the information about the online meeting and attended it for the first time. Their meeting did not have an open discussion time, so I had to turn on my camera and physically raise my hand for 10-15 minutes, but the host ignored me. I ended up speaking up, and asked a question about the north side /south side choice. One of the committees just told me that "the selectman already voted on the north side. It is not time to discuss about it". The committees and town never approached abutters nor invited us to the discussion before the selectmen voted, but they decided without our opinions and they just told me it is too late to discuss. We feel it is very unfair and disrespectful to our property and quality of life. During the meeting some committee members complained about us questioning. That person's tone was very cold and sounded very annoyed. It made us discouraged to attend the community path meetings. It was enough for me to believe we were not welcomed to the meeting, and we were not part of the community which they were talking about.

Last few months we could not attend the Belmont Community Path Project meeting, since the Covid-19 situation affected our family a lot in many ways. One of our fellow abutters kindly helps us and provides us with the meeting notes. The below is the list of concerns regarding our property.

1. *pounding in the retaining wall's steel pylons needed to hold up Pleasant St may have an impact on your home and its foundations.* *As far as I can tell, it also may mean that you will lose that section of land i.e. it may be seized. Also all of that pounding and construction will affect your well being due to the vibrations and noise.*

2. *last plan I sent you indicates that the construction will affect your driveway and parking.* *Whether permanently or temporarily and for how long if temporarily no one knows since they haven't talked about it.*

3. *the path/park will be build 9' from your living room window and, as far as we know from Michalak, it will be ~10' high which means it will be level or almost level with your roof.*

4. the proposed drainage (perforated 8" pipe) is inadequate and (I recall you mentioned) you already have drainage/water issues.

5. to keep the path clear of snow and ice, they will use salt. The salt will run into your land and kill the plants and any landscaping that Nitsch installs.

6. to keep the path clear of snow and ice, the snow will be moved to your side so that will be part of your drainage issue.

7. this path will be lighted 24/7 and the light will affect your health.

8. passing so close to your home there are questions of privacy, security, litter and noise (open all night so people may pass by at all times). The estimates are that about 1000 people will go by daily.

Unless they have already met with you since last you emailed me:

9. neither Nitsch or the town has bothered to inform you or consult with you about the plans for your home. You have had to rely on reports that an abutter (me) sends you which is disgraceful.

As mentioned, we tried to engage with the town and the Community Path Committee. I asked for an abutter walkthrough since our Pleasant Street section was not included in the one in late 2019. It took three months to make it happen in August. At the meeting, the design company, Nitsch, promised to perform the land survey because the site plan Nitsch uses and the site plan we were given when we bought our house are different. The land survey the Nitsch promised never happened, but the 25% design plan says the path will be only 9 feet away from our house even though our record says the property line is 24 feet away from our house.

We are very confused and helpless since the town of Belmont and the community path project committee are not responsive and do not want to discuss with us. I am not sure why they keep ignoring our opinions. Since a lot of movements and incidents happened in the US and in this area, I started worrying that we are not heard because we are immigrants, and we do not speak English well.

We heard a rumor that once 25% design is submitted, and if we don't agree with the plan or design, we will need to sue the State, not the town. That is the reason the town and the community path project committee wanted to submit the 25% design as soon as possible without hearing anything from abutters. Is that true? Is it too late for us to be heard?

Thank you very much for your time reading my message and your help. We feel miserable and distressed while dealing with the community path issues and thinking of our future life here. We would really appreciate it if you could help us out and provide any guidance.

Best,
Naomi

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jessicalamae@gmail.com

February 7, 2021

Mr. Matt Genova
mgenova@ctps.org

Dear Mr. Genova,

I am writing with respect the Belmont Community Path that is being considered for construction. This is an update to a letter I sent last May regarding the same project. As a homeowner and direct abutter of the proposed northern route, I still have serious unaddressed concerns about the creation of this path. Since the planning of the path has continued this past year without adequate consideration of abutters' concerns, I feel I must speak up again to reiterate the core issues at hand.

In this past year, I have made time in my busy schedule to attend numerous CPPC meetings to try and get answers about the project and to voice my concerns. I was generally treated as a passive bystander with little or no opportunity to engage the planners. The engineering company commissioned to draw up the 25% plan, Nitch, was instructed to meet with individual abutters on Pleasant Street to discuss impacts on our properties. Over email, I provided every window of time over two weeks of my calendar to the project lead, Mr. John Michalak, and to the CPPC; these dates/times included large blocks over five specific days in mid-August. I did not hear back from Mr. Michalak until September 22, 2020, and at that time he apologized for the delay and asked for more times off my calendar. Since I could not get answers to my questions, and since I was not kept informed of the evolving plans, but especially since my email offering meeting times was ignored, I hired an attorney to represent my interests going forward. Attorney Eric Goldberg and I then coordinated a new series of times that the two of us were willing to meet Mr. Michalak and, presumably, a representative from the CPPC, in my backyard. Mr. Goldberg sent six separate dates, each with large windows, for a possible meeting in early-mid October, 2020, to Mr. Michalak and Mr. Glenn Clancy. Unfortunately, neither I nor Mr. Goldberg ever received an email in response. The meeting never happened. I consider this a lost opportunity to engage in a diplomatic discourse about the impacts of this proposed project on my property.

When I wrote you last May, I was new to town. I believed that I would eventually find out the answers to my questions and even that I would have some voice in the planning since, like the many families on Channing Street, this project, if constructed, will have a dramatic impact on my home. However, I have since come to the conclusion that there is essentially no genuine concern for those of us with the most at stake. Abutters are not welcome as participants in the meetings, and the planners, none of whose homes directly border the proposed path, are the exclusive voices in this project.

On rare occasion, we are allowed to speak, but generally the organizers swiftly move on as if this is just a perfunctory component of the meeting. The most concern for abutters that I have witnessed in the numerous CPPC meetings I have attended has been directed toward the business owners whose properties will be impacted. I do not know from where this special concern stems, but it strikes me as unfair because we should all matter. Our backyards are our sanctuaries, and the impacts of this project will directly affect our quality of life, not just the possible bottom line of a company's books.

I have many serious concerns about this project, but I will highlight three of the most pressing here:

- 1) **Lighting:** As a "linear path," this project will require extensive lighting and, from what we abutters have surmised, constant nighttime lighting. As explained in the letter I sent to your office last June, constant lighting close to residences will alter the intrinsic light-dark cycle that humans, as animals, rely on as input to a variety of essential biological processes. There will be negative and untold impacts on the health of direct abutters; notably, disruptions to human light-dark cycles are associated with sleep disorders, cognitive deficits, metabolic and heart disease, cancer, and even infertility. I am happy to discuss this further, but I encourage you to share the letter I sent in June 2020 with others in your office responsible for deciding whether to allocate state funds to this project. Beyond the human impacts I focused on in that letter, constant nighttime lighting will impact wildlife that reside in the now-dark wooded areas beside the train tracks. Additionally, it will contribute more generally to the problem of light pollution.
- 2) **Tree preservation:** My house is separated from the commuter rail by a small group of mature shade trees, several of whose trunks are squarely within my property. I have engaged a professional surveyor and arborist to map the precise boundaries of my property and to note the condition of each tree. There are several very mature maple trees that are especially vulnerable to disruptions that will be created during construction. Beyond the trunks and canopies of these trees, I am deeply concerned for their root systems. The proposed project will undoubtedly place these root systems in peril, both from the construction itself and from the altered and unnatural landscape that is created. I am concerned about the trees *per se*, and I am also concerned about the impacts their loss will have on native wildlife and on my own home (shade, privacy, aesthetic).
- 3) **Drainage:** I am also concerned about the water drainage in that area as it slopes to a low-lying, vegetated area prone to accumulating standing water after rains. After heavy rain, there are two pools of standing water that form and can take a substantial time to disperse. These form in my yard at the base of the slope on which they propose to build the path. The drainage problem will only be exacerbated by this project, especially since the path will be constructed at a height considerably higher than my yard. I am not convinced that the planners have considered water impacts on abutters' properties in their design. I would like to know how they propose to mitigate drain-off and why they must use standard asphalt rather than some more sophisticated solution that would allow for more ground capture of rain water and melted snow. Relatedly, I share the concerns raised by other abutters about what

types of chemicals might be used to melt snow on the linear path (as well as what kinds of pesticides they might use in the landscaping plans—though the landscaping plans seem completely unsettled as far as I can tell, waffling wildly between chain-link fence, concrete walls, and various plant installations).

Considering so many homeowners on the north side of the tracks object to the path being constructed on the north side, I urge the state to again look at other options. There is an obvious solution to this issue, which would be to situate the path south of MBTA tracks. For those of us on Pleasant Street, this would eliminate the concern about the health of our private trees, and it also makes more sense because the path would be cutting through an empty wooded area owned by the MBTA and Town of Belmont instead. It may also make more sense with respect to Channing St. The south side is more logical as a means of accessing the path if we are imagining high school students will be using it. There may also be an economical advantage to the southern route considering it would not necessitate two railroad crossings be created.

In summary, I urge you to investigate the feelings of the Belmont residents with the most at stake with respect to this project. We are the ones that will have to live with the consequences of this path on our properties, our lives, and our health on a daily basis. Above all, my top concern is that abutters and regular Belmont citizens have not been included in this discussion. At best, we are allowed to be observers, and in that observatory mode, I have become deeply concerned for what I see and hear. I share the impression that the system is set up for those who have power and time to shut out and/or grind the rest of us down to get what they want. I am especially struck by the lack of abutters on the planning committee itself. How can that possibly lead to a fair and balanced consideration of the impacts? I hope you will take our situations into account when you and your colleagues are deciding the fate of this project. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. You can contact me and my attorney by email, phone, or regular mail—I am happy to relay Mr. Goldberg's contact information to your office.

Sincerely,



Jessica L. Whited

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 7, 2021

Hello Mr. Genova,

I wanted to follow up on my last email with one point I forgot to mention. This path is being labeled a "Community Path" unfortunately this couldn't be farther from that. The Community that this path is trying to be forced into is opposed to it. There are too many negative factors that will impact our properties and the neighborhood we live in. This path does not benefit any of the abutters, it is a detriment to our properties and current way of life, intruding on our privacy, sense of security, and homes.

Thank you.

Proposed Belmont Bike Path Abutter

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February 5, 2021

Dear Mr. Matt Genova,

I am writing to request that the bike path in Belmont not be funded as it is currently being proposed. For years the abutters have been completely dismissed with our concerns and valid reservations. The town hired a firm to Conduct feasibility studies and determine the best route. The firm's path route proposed was not the side of the railroad tracks behind our homes. The town dismissed the decision on the path route from the very firm they hired to decide the best place for the path! This money spent on hiring that firm was wasted, as it appears that they are insistant on putting a path behind our homes and do not care about the problems this will cause to the abutters. There are reports that certain residents private property will have to be used in order to actually make this path work and these residents have not consented to this. How can a project be funded when it is not even completely feasible? Having a path on a live railroad track is not a desirable or safe idea.

The abutters already have to deal with the train which we knew about when purchasing our homes. To be forced to have thousands of people behind your home every week is completely unsettling. The elevation of the land is such that anyone on that land would be Able to see directly into our homes. Water drainage and runoff into our properties, rodent displacement, noise and safety concerns, pollution, etc. are just a few of the serious concerns we face. There will be a tax override on the ballot in Belmont asking residents to raise our property taxes to pay for current operations in the town. If the town can not even balance its budget with its current income, a bike path should not be a priority at this time, especially if Belmont is expected to be providing funding of its own for this costly project.

Thank you,

Disheartened Abutter to the proposed Belmont Bike Path

Submitted via email by cassidy550@yahoo.com.

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 10, 2021

Dear Mr. Genova,

I am reaching out to you to in an effort to remove the Belmont community bike path project as a possibility on Channing Road or the North side of the commuter rail tracks.

I can give lots of stats, facts and figures. There has been research done on the terrain, traffic flow, crime stats and so on. I'm sure you have all of the concerns and issues in your files.

The reality is the proposed community bike path is a disruption to the neighborhood as a whole. When you purchase a home, for the most part, you know what your life will look like in that home and neighborhood including projected changes to the landscape for years to come. The bike path will be an enormous change in every aspect of everyday life to the residents on Channing Road and the surrounding streets of the neighborhood. The quality of life for the residents on Channing Road will forever be changed.

I can understand how this projected idea looks okay on paper. What is dismaying is should this project go through, the real issues that come up will not be able to be changed without a constant battle or until someone is injured. Paper is not real life. The bike path will create real life problems.

I am not anti bicycle. I'm happy to see people using bikes to commute or simply to enjoy for exercise. I do know first hand that people get complacent with rules and this leads to issues. I have been a witness to and been involved in incidents involving bikes on the Concord Ave bike path. I was waiting to parallel park and a bicyclist punched his fist through my open window and swore at me to get out of the bike lane. I have seen bicyclists assume they are somehow in a protected bubble as long as they are in the bike path and nothing pertains to them including stopping for people in the crosswalk. I have seen bicyclists go from moving with the flow of traffic in a lane to then becoming a "bicyclist" again to go through a red light. Bicyclist do not monitor their speed and are not regulated or governed by any laws regarding speed. The risk of accident and injury a bike can cause due to speed in a quiet neighborhood is alarming. I mention these incidents because these are real everyday issues that happen. Regardless if the path is on the street or on the tracks speed and entitlement will follow and safety is a real concern. By putting a bike path into a neighborhood, particularly this already tight maze of a setting, these issues as well as others will arise daily.

The residents of Channing Road as well as the immediate surrounding neighbors deserve to have their neighborhood maintain the same safe and quiet area they moved into.

I urge you to take what I have written into consideration to discontinue any plans of a bike path on Channing Road and the on the North side of the tracks to preserve the safety and integrity of the surrounding neighborhood.

Thank you for your time.

Tobey Donahue
68 Claflin St
Belmont, MA 02478
617-212-1702

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 11, 2021

Dear Mr. Genova,

Let me begin by echoing the concerns outlined in the letters of 2/7/21 to you from my neighbors Jessica Whited, Aleida Leza and Darin Takemoto. My name is Merrie Watters. I've had a 40 year career in O.R. nursing. I love my home, my gardens and my neighbors. I live at 105 Channing Rd. in Belmont which abuts the proposed bike path adjacent to the MBTA train tracks. This has been my family's home since 1965. I wrote to you last year on May 21st regarding my concerns about this project which I am, and have been strongly opposed to since 1997 when the Belmont Citizens' Forum (BCF) proposed this ridiculous intrusion into our lives.

Since that time I have attended several CPAC and Town meetings to protect the security, sanctity and value of my home. Many times I have met with arrogance, disrespect, and hostility from bike path proponents. The Town meetings are very poorly managed and packed with non residents of Belmont who come to push their agenda for a bike path. Note my use of the term bike path because despite the BCF's efforts to broaden their support by disguising it as a "community path," it is a disaster waiting to happen which the Town of Belmont has wasted too much money for exploring and developing. You can put spandex with a matching helmet, sneakers and lipstick on it but it's still a disaster waiting to happen.

Can you imagine a "community path" that is used by recreational and commuter cyclists, skateboarders, in line and roller skaters, baby strollers or carriages, children's bicycles, tricycles, runners, pedestrians of all ages and let's not forget the ADA that mandates wheelchair access and people with other assistive devices? Who would have right of way? Who is responsible for security and EMS access? I would like to see the plans for how they intend to manage this logistical nightmare.

Over the last several years there has been a great increase in light and noise pollution due to the expansion of the high school athletic playing fields, practices, games and public events held there. The stadium lighting has increased to the point where it floods my upstairs bedroom windows so I've had to buy black out shades which are expensive. By the way, there's no stadium. I have to use ear plugs so I can sleep in the morning. With the plan to locate the bike path on the north side of the tracks, the Nitsch Engineering design calls for the removal of all of the beautiful mature hardwood trees lining my backyard. They are the only buffer we have against light and noise pollution. Now the bike path plan calls for even more lighting. Enough is enough.

Back in 2016 the Town of Belmont hired Pare Engineering to produce designs for locating the bike path. I was impressed with 3 plans they submitted for locating the path on the south side of the tracks which would make much more sense and reduce costs enormously. It would facilitate access for middle and high school students, as well as EMS/maintenance vehicles. Unfortunately, those plans magically disappeared and the contract was given to Nitsch Engineering. The Belmont Citizens' Forum owns the strip of land abutting the north side of the tracks which is why they have pushed so hard for the north side location because they are stuck with a piece of property they can't use. I have raised this point at public meetings as a potential conflict of interest, but it has fallen on deaf ears.

This issue has been a great stress to me and many of my neighbors for many years now. Please make it go away. I would appreciate confirmation that you have received this letter.

Thank you kindly,
Merrie Watters, R.N., M.S., CNOR Emeritus

Despite my request for a written response to multiple emails to Belmont town officials and selectmen about my concerns, I have never received one.

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 12, 2021

Mr. Genova,

I write to you as a long-time resident of Belmont who served on the **very first Belmont Community Path Committee** where we completed charrettes, multiple meetings with residents and businesses and finally voted with a 4 to 4 tie on recommending the Northside vs. the Southside of the Railroad tracks. Numerous issues were considered including emergency access, crossing the tracks, nearness to neighbors and businesses, access to the Belmont schools complex. Needless to say the 4 to 4 tie did not provide a definitive direction so a second Community Path Committee was formed.

The **second Community Path** committee was authorized by the SelectBoard to hire a consultant. **PARE group** was selected and the Town paid them a **fee of \$175,425** out of the Town Budget; more charrettes, more meetings with Town residents and businesses, more discussions with Belmont Emergency management. **PARE's recommendation was to locate the Path on the Southside, the same side at the Belmont Schools complex.**

Following this recommendation **Senator Brownsberger**, encouraged by **a group who owns property** on the Northside, entered the discussion. Making his opinion known to be in favor of the Belmont Citizens Forum group who owned property on the Northside, the project came again to a standstill.

I realize that you are a public servant with no political loyalty. My relating this information to you comes from my disgust with politicians wasting citizens time on committees, wasting financial resources in the form of consulting fees, and their unwillingness to listen to residents, businesses, consultants and emergency management. I am disgusted with politicians sweeping in to make a decision that suits themselves and a small group of their cronies.

Belmont needs a community Path. It should be shared with Commuters and Residents alike. It should not involve land taking from businesses and payments to non profits who purchased land on the Northside in order to make a profit. It should be the least dangerous and onerous choice, and It should include abutters input, especially after so many resources have been dedicated to this Project.

I hope you will be part of a fair resolution of this project. PARE, along with previous dedicated committees have made it clear that the path should be on the Southside. Please don't allow politics and greed to change a fair solution which is to locate the Path on the Southside.

Yours truly,
Tommasina Olson, Town Meeting Member
10 Bay State Road, Belmont. MA
(Not an abutter; On the other side of Town)

I hope you will think about this Project and treat it fairly in the same way you would want a major Project like this to be decided your Town

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 13, 2021

Paul Cobuzzi
125 Channing Rd.
Belmont, Ma 02478
2/11/2021

Mr. Matt Genova

mgenova@ctps.org

Dear Sir

I am the current owner of 30 years of the property located at 125 Channing Rd, Belmont, Ma 02478. I have lived in this area for most(72 years) of my life(all but 3 years). I grew up in the house next door. My home sits adjacent to the MBTA Fitchburg rail line. I have written to you concerning this project on 5/21/2020 and 9/11/2020 concerning other problems.

My issue here is the name of the "Fitchburg Cutoff Bike Path" or whatever and the actual signage displayed on the route itself, "BIKE ROUTE" in capital letters. There are the same signs displayed all through the BIKE ROUTE. This BIKE ROUTE is plowed in the winter, so it is meant to be used all the time even though the rules say partial year(April? thru October?) use only. My understanding is that there are supposed to be only pedal powered type bikes traveling this BIKE ROUTE. Yet I have seen electric bikes more than once and even a car at one point. Unfortunately I was too stunned to snap a picture.

The true purpose of the CPPC is to extend this BIKE ROUTE north of the MBTA tracks through Belmont and into Waltham not as a "Belmont community path" for pedestrians, dog walkers and bikes etc but as a commuter hi-way.

The CPPC wants the Belmont bike hi-way(north of the tracks) to be lighted day and night, summer and winter, at a cost of an extra \$4million to install. Our neighborhood does not need the extra noise pollution and traffic, glare and expense from the added flood lights. The alternative locations south of the tracks as suggested by the Pare Corp were rejected by the CPPC as were the expertise(safety and law enforcement)of the Belmont Police and Fire chiefs. Note: the Chiefs or their representatives have not attended a CPPC meeting in probably 2 years. The CPPC does not listen to opinions that disagree with their own. Please note that there are no Channing Rd residents appointed to the CPPC committee.

We also do not need to be told what is best for our neighborhood by a minority few who think they know what is best for us. The CPPC has spent almost \$2.5 million on an engineering firm to create a BIKE ROUTE design on land that they do not own nor have the right of way rights.

Thank you,
Paul Cobuzzi

Notice the white bag of trash just to the right and 10 ft beyond the sign in the bushes. With snow. Dated 2/8/2021.

Sign BIKE ROUTE END Belmont.



Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 13, 2021

Paul Cobuzzi
125 Channing Rd.
Belmont, Ma 02478
2/11/2021

Mr. Matt Genova

mgenova@ctps.org

Dear Sir

I am the current owner of 30 years of the property located at 125 Channing Rd, Belmont, Ma 02478. I have lived in this area for most of my life(all but 3 years). I grew up in the house next door. My home sits adjacent to the MBTA Fitchburg rail line. I have written to you concerning this project on 5/21/2020 and 9/11/2020.

My issue here is the beautiful steel picket fence that starts in Belmont and extends into Cambridge for an approximately equal distance. This fence must be less than 10 years old and already it has 6 damaged sections. There are 3 consecutive sections in Belmont and 3 separate sections in Cambridge. This fence separates the BIKE ROUTE from the MBTA RR.

The current CPPC plan is to place the BIKE ROUTE north of the tracks in Belmont and add a fence in between. They have not specified the type. Trespassers have been cutting holes into the existing fences for all my memory, 72 years. If you allow the CPPC to extend the BIKE ROUTE the way they want, the same thing will happen. Fences did not stop the WW1 and WW2 POWs from escaping, nor did it stop the east Berliners from escaping into the West. For all my life, the MBTA has been warning us to stay away from the tracks. Now the CPPC people are calling it a park, implying that it is a safe place, that it is a play ground. East of Brighton street, there is little temptation to cross the RR tracks at that point but the fence is still damaged. West of Brighton street, there are two schools(population approximately 600 each) south of the tracks and the entire Winnbrook and Belmont Hill neighborhood school populations north of the tracks that will cut and find holes in the fences. No one goes up there and is just injured. In a collision between a train and a pedestrian, the pedestrian dies. Even a titanium fence can be cut with a diamond blade.

Thank you,
Paul Cobuzzi

Steel fence damaged sections Belmont side.



Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 13, 2021

Paul Cobuzzi
125 Channing Rd.
Belmont, Ma 02478
2/11/2021

Mr. Matt Genova

mgenova@ctps.org

Dear Sir

I am the current owner of 30 years of the property located at 125 Channing Rd, Belmont, Ma 02478. I have lived in this area for most of my life(all but 3 years). I grew up in the house next door. My home sits adjacent to the MBTA Fitchburg rail line. I have written to you concerning this project on 5/21/2020 and 9/11/2020.

My issue here is the garbage(trash and doggy poop)discarded by the users who take advantage of this beautiful area that accumulates on the bike route over a period of months. People do not care. If it is not theirs, they are pigs. They pass through an area and throw their doggy poop and trash where ever convenient. It does not appear to be removed by the DCR, City of Cambridge or Town of Belmont or anyone else who may be responsible for the property with any frequency. Who knows what is hidden beneath the snow!

In the case of the Belmont BIKE ROUTE north of the tracks, the trash and doggy poop will remain there or get blown into our back yards. Because it will out of sight, it will be out of the mind of the town and the school department and the DCR. Whoever's responsibility it will be, the town will not deal with it. We, the Channing Rd abutters, will be stuck with it.

Thank you,
Paul Cobuzzi

Trash bag and doggy poop. No snow. Dated 1/26/2021.



Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 13, 2021

Paul Cobuzzi
125 Channing Rd.
Belmont, Ma 02478
2/11/2021

Mr. Matt Genova

mgenova@ctps.org

Dear Sir

I am the current owner of 30 years of the property located at 125 Channing Rd, Belmont, Ma 02478. I have lived in this area for most of my life(all but 3 years). I grew up in the house next door. My home sits adjacent to the MBTA Fitchburg rail line. I have written to you concerning this project on 5/21/2020 and 9/11/2020.

My issue here is the tent village that has been allowed to grow for several months now along the Fitchburg Cutoff path. This is not the first village that has sprung up in this area. There was a really good sized village within the "bird sanctuary " on the Cambridge end. Also there was one under a bridge of route 2 down near the circle. The current village is north of the fence and the "praxair" tank that belongs to the very last building on Cambridge Park Drive. The village is partially camouflaged within the BIKE ROUTE. The current village has doubled in size since November.

This is an excellent reason we want the BIKE ROUTE south of the RR tracks on town property and Concord Ave. It can be easily patrolled and secured by the police, cleaned by the town, lighted by the existing sports field lights and street lights from Concord Ave. In case of an accident, emergency vehicles can access it over existing town driveways without cutting through our back yards. The current CPPC dream is blocked at both Channing Rd ends to emergency vehicles by existing buildings(7 Channing Rd and 40 Brighton St). Our properties will not be awash in more flood lights(\$4 million worth). It will not cost \$24million for half of it. Our privacy and security will be assured.

Thank you,
Paul Cobuzzi

My iPad seems to limit me to 3 pics per letter.

Attached are 3 pictures of the "village" because it has grown from 2 tents to at least 3 tents maybe 4 complete with bicycles and shopping carts(not shown).

Green tent dated 2/4/2021.



Blue tent dated 11/29/2020.



Yellow tent dated 11/29/2020.



Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 13, 2021

Over the past few years there has been increased interest and push in the creation of that path that will connect Cambridge to Waltham through Belmont.

Not originally from Belmont, now living on Channing Road, I have attended a few meetings and witnessed hostility towards abutters from the biking community, some apparently from other towns.

I have seen town officials, committee representatives, and members of the public, ignore, disrespect, and belittle abutters, who want to be heard and included in the process of moving forward with a true community path, not a commuter path.

There remains valid abutter concerns that still have not been addressed and continued to be ignored by town officials, committee members, and the engineering firm.

I do hope you will take all this into account when considering this project for funding at this time. There seems to me more work to be done before it can be moved along in the process.

Respectfully,

Patti Forte
321 Channing Road

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 15, 2021

Dear Mr. Genova,

I understand there is currently an open comment period for the MPO regarding the proposed Belmont Community Path. I would like to say that I heard about this from the Town of Belmont, but they have not informed abutters about the open comment period, instead I heard about it from one of my concerned neighbors. The Town appears to deliberately withhold information from the abutters, and I was told by a neighbor that Community Path Committee members were quite upset when they found out homeowners were writing letters to the MPO the last time and did not think it was appropriate. As I stated in my previous letter, all trust with the Town regarding the Community Path has completely dissolved, as they repeatedly address homeowner concerns only to later go back and reverse their decision on issues like the location of the path, screening walls, lighting and the taking of privately owned land. In fact, it appears they circumvent the open meeting laws for the Community Path Meetings by holding them at 8 a.m. in the morning when most people have to work. The Town does not seem to follow any due process in their decision making. Originally when the location of the Path was being decided, the Taking of Private property was supposed to be a "fatal flaw". Now, as part of their design they are talking about multiple Takings, even though no discussions or agreements have been made regarding any of the land they plan on taking. The Town needs to revisit the selection of the Path location as these weighted factors would likely alter conclusions about the location of the path.

Another reason funds should not be allocated to this project is the fact that there is no plan to provide access to the path over a half mile of isolated area. The fire chief had indicated that there would need to be openings in the screening wall or fence along the path, yet no one has discussed this with abutters. The path would create de facto easements on homeowner properties. Aside from the fact that this has never been addressed, it is also likely impossible as most of us have solid fences that cannot be traversed. Others plan on putting in solid fences if the path goes in to protect their families from trespassers. I don't understand how any organization could proceed with a design when they have not addressed access needs and the Taking of property

I would also like to raise the concern of waste, fraud and abuse of state and federal funds. At this point since construction funds have not been allocated I have no stake to report to the Inspector General which is why I would like to see the allocation of funds to this project cease before they are mismanaged. As stated in my previous letter, the alternate location of the path on the South side of the rail would be a savings of 3.9 million dollars at a minimum. Since my previous letter, significant progress has been made on the new high school and likely within in a year there will be accessible bike paths on the South side of the rail as per design of the new high school. A path on the north side of the rail from Alexander Ave to Brighton Street will be completely unnecessary and an unnecessary allocation of funds.

One last issue, in my last letter, I explained the unethical connection of One of the Officers of the Belmont Citizens Forum who is also a leader on the Town Community Path Committee. It appears the Town has realized the liability of accepting the land from the Belmont Citizens Forum as I heard they are now trying to give the land to the state. I would caution any

engagement of the State with the Belmont Citizens Forum (a private organization) over the acceptance of this land as it appears there would be ethical issues, by one of the Officers of the organization having significant input on the application of the state funds.

Cosmo Caterino

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

February 15, 2021

Dear Mr. Genova,

On February 7, 2021, my husband and I sent you a letter in which we included our deep concern about the planned use of tunnel jacking. Now we have relevant information on this subject that we bring to your attention.

To recap: Nitsch's Engineering proposal to Belmont consisted almost entirely of tunnel jacking and, at the initial meeting with the town (~Sept 2019), Engineer Michalak insisted on tunnel jacking without any soil boring data on which to base his recommendation. I was surprised by this so I consulted with Pare's Engineer Amy Archer (author of the Proj. #609204's feasibility study) who also expressed surprise at tunnel jacking and told me that, in her opinion, cut-and-cover was the best approach if supported by soil data: the tunnel could be installed in days instead of weeks; there was less probability of damage to nearby homes and to homeowners' health and well-being; the method was less expensive.

A few months later, tunnel jacking evolved from being Nitsch's recommendation into Belmont's choice, according to Mr. Michalak's statement at a public meeting, although soil borings still had not been done. Fast forward to late 2020: Mr. Michalak informed the public that the MBTA had recently announced a preference for tunnel jacking for all installations going under the rails. Mr. Michalak explained that the MBTA was dissatisfied with cut-and-cover's soil settling/compaction as observed in other projects and that as a result, the MBTA had made it clear it preferred jacking to cut-and-cover .

Since our suspicion has been that the choice of tunnel jacking is all about price and not necessarily about engineering, I sought to inquire about the MBTA's stance with regard to tunnel jacking for a long time without success. However, this past week I did succeed in contacting Erik Stoophoff, MBTA's Chief Engineer.

My question: *"In general, does the MBTA have a preference for constructing a tunnel under the RR by tunnel jacking or by cut-and-cover?"*

Engineer Stoophoff's answer: *"All infrastructure that gets installed below our tracks is evaluated on a case-by-case basis."*

As far as we can see, Chief Engineer's words - *"on a case-by-case basis"* - demolishes the latest excuse for choosing tunnel jacking for this project prior to even having supporting data. Nitsch's subcontractor GZA was supposedly engaged in finally performing the soil borings this month that will provide the data.

We are concerned because of all of our homes sit on “bad soil” i.e. clay either adjacent to or near the proposed tunnel. We suspect that the jacking recommendation is primarily due to the fact that it is far more an expensive method than the standard method of cut-and-cover. The fact that jacking is more expensive fits in with the persistent and surprising effort to inflate the project’s budget that I have witnessed at various CPPC public meetings. We trust that, if this 25% design plan is accepted, the MPO and MassDOT will access very carefully whether the soil boring data truly warrant a choice that has the greatest potential to be damaging to our homes and health.

Sincerely,

Maria A. Leza
Darin Takemoto
91 Channing Rd.
Belmont, MA 02478



TOWN OF IPSWICH

Public Works Department
25 Green Street
Ipswich, Massachusetts 01938

Richard W. Clarke, Director
Frank J. Ventimiglia, Operations Manager

Office: (978) 356-6612
Fax: (978) 356-6616

January 21, 2021

David Mohler
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: County Street – State Transportation Improvement Project

To Whom It May Concern:

In a collaborative effort, various Town of Ipswich Boards and Commissions are writing to express support for the Town of Ipswich, County Street State Transportation Improvement Project (STIP) application. The proposed complete streets and safety improvements will increase bike ability, walkability and accessibility within the project corridor. Rehabilitation of the County Street bridges over Ipswich River will address existing deficiencies.

County Street parallels South Main Street and provides access to various destinations including the Sidney Shurcliff River Walk, Town Hall, Ipswich Public Boat ramp, and Great Neck and Little Neck. Currently, this corridor is well traveled by pedestrians and bicyclists seeking these destinations or simply for a casual walk through the Town and scenic locations. Bicycle and pedestrian travel along this corridor need improvements especially over the County Street bridges where defined sidewalks currently do not exist. Further, the corridors do not currently include markings or signage to demonstrate shared use for the various forms of transportation.

Funding received through the STIP will provide much needed safety improvements to the roadway as well as the County Street bridges. The Town of Ipswich is active in improving safe travel and accessibility for our residents and visitors and intend to continue with that vision through this project.

Consideration to awarding this funding to the Town of Ipswich is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Richard Clarke
Department of Public Works



Town of Ipswich

Office of the Town Manager

25 Green Street ♦ Ipswich, Massachusetts 01938

p: (978) 356-6609 ♦ f: (978) 356-6616 ♦ e: tm@ipswichma.gov ♦ w: ipswichma.gov

January 21, 2021

David Mohler
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: County Street – State Transportation Improvement Project

To Whom It May Concern:

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Consideration to awarding this funding to the Town of Ipswich is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Anthony Marino
Town Manager

tm@ipswichma.gov



TOWN OF IPSWICH
Planning Board
Department of Planning & Development
25 Green Street
Ipswich, Massachusetts 01938

Keith Anderson, Chair
Ethan Parsons, Director of Planning & Development

Office: (978) 356-6607

January 28, 2021

David Mohler
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: County Street – State Transportation Improvement Project

Dear Mr. Mohler:

We are writing on behalf of the Ipswich Planning Board and the Department of Planning & Development to express our support for the Town's application for the County Street State Transportation Improvement Project. The proposed complete streets and safety improvements will increase bicycling safety, walkability and accessibility within the project corridor. Rehabilitation of the County Street bridges over the Ipswich River will address existing deficiencies.

County Street parallels South Main Street and provides access to various destinations including the Sidney Shurcliff River Walk, Town Hall, Ipswich Public Boat ramp, and Great Neck and Little Neck. Currently, this corridor is well traveled by pedestrians and bicyclists seeking these destinations or simply for a casual walk through the Town and scenic locations. Bicycle and pedestrian travel along this corridor needs improvements, especially over the County Street bridges where sidewalks currently do not exist. Further, the corridors do not currently include markings or signage to demonstrate shared use for the various forms of transportation.

Funding received through the STIP will provide much needed safety improvements to the roadway as well as the County Street bridges. The Town of Ipswich is actively seeking opportunities to improve safe travel and accessibility for our residents and visitors and intends to continue with that vision through this project.

We greatly appreciate you considering funding this project.

Sincerely,


Keith Anderson, Chair
Ipswich Planning Board


Ethan Parsons
Director of Planning & Development



TOWN OF IPSWICH

25 GREEN ST., IPSWICH, MA 01938

Office: (978) 356-6661

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
CONSERVATION AGENT

Web: www.ipswichma.gov

February 3, 2021

David Mohler
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: County Street - State Transportation Improvement Project

To Whom It May Concern:

In a collaborative effort, various Town of Ipswich Boards and Commissions are writing to express support for the Town of Ipswich, County Street State Transportation Improvement Project (STIP) application. The proposed complete streets and safety improvements will increase bike ability, walkability and accessibility within the project corridor. Rehabilitation of the County Street bridges over Ipswich River will address existing deficiencies.

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Funding received through the STIP will provide much needed safety improvements to the roadway as well as the County Street bridges. The Town of Ipswich is active in improving safe travel and accessibility for our residents and visitors and intend to continue with that vision through this project.

Consideration to awarding this funding to the Town of Ipswich is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Jennifer Hughes
Chairperson, Ipswich Conservation Commission

TOWN OF IPSWICH UTILITIES DEPARTMENT



272 HIGH STREET • IPSWICH, MA 01938 • (978) 356-6635 • WWW.IPSWICHUTILITIES.ORG

February 9, 2021

David Mohler
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: County Street – State Transportation Improvement Project

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express support for the Town of Ipswich, County Street State Transportation Improvement Project (STIP) application. The proposed complete streets and safety improvements will increase bike ability, walkability and accessibility within the project corridor. Rehabilitation of the County Street bridges over Ipswich River will address existing deficiencies.

An existing 10-inch water main supported on the downstream face of the County Street Bridges is in poor condition and needs replacement. It is critical this project be funded to address serious deficiencies that impact the reliability of this water main. The water main serves a vital role, looping the water system to provide system redundancy and improved water quality. Further degradation of the bridge will lead to a failure of the water main.

Additionally, this project will enhance access to various destinations in Ipswich, including the Sidney Shurcliff River Walk near the Ipswich Town Hall, complimenting a current Wastewater Department project to stabilize an eroded banking that is threatening the stability of a sewer trunk line.

Funding received through the STIP will provide much needed safety improvements to the roadway as well as improvements to the County Street bridges. The Town of Ipswich is active in improving infrastructure that promotes safe travel and accessibility for our residents and visitors.

Consideration to awarding this funding to the Town of Ipswich is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Vicki Halmen
Water & Wastewater Director



City of Peabody
 Department of Community Development and Planning

City Hall • 24 Lowell Street • Peabody, Massachusetts 01960 • Tel. 978-538-5900 • Fax 978-538-5987

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: David Mohler, Chairperson Boston Region MPO

FROM: Department of Community Development and Planning, Brendan Callahan, Assistant Director of Planning

SUBJECT: Peabody Independence Greenway TIP Projects
FY24 – Peabody Independence Greenway Extension (Project #609211)
FY25- Multi-use Path Construction of Independence Greenway at I-95 & Rt. 1 (Project #610544)

DATE: February 3, 2021

Please find a project progress summary through 1/21/21 for Peabody’s Transportation Improvement Program projects for the Peabody Independence Greenway. Currently, the City has two Bicycle/Pedestrian projects approved for FY24 (#609211) and FY25 (#610544) construction funding.

FY24 – Peabody Independence Greenway Extension (Project #609211)

- The 25% design is ongoing and anticipated submission date is 3/19/21 and MassDOT approval by 7/29/21.
- Project is on track to:
 - Advertise Construction Contract: 4/01/23
 - Bid Opening: 5/23/23
 - Construction Contract NTP: 7/22/23
 - Complete Construction: 7/21/24

FY25 – Multi-use Path Construction of Independence Greenway at I-95 & Rt. 1

- City awarded engineering design services contract to BSC Group 10/29/20
- City held stakeholder project kickoff meeting on 12/3/20. Meeting attendees included:
 - MassDOT Representatives: Michael Trepanier (Proj. Mgr.); Connie Raphael (D4); Frank Suszynski (D4); Brian Fallon (D4); Timothy Paris (D4); Pam Marquis (ROW Administrator)
 - MA DCR MassTrails Program: Amanda Lewis (Grant Program Manager)
 - BSC Group: William Paille (Project Manager); Kathryn Eagan (Sr. Design Engineer)
 - City of Peabody: Brendan Callahan (Assistant Director of Planning)
- The 25% design is ongoing and anticipated submission date is 1/25/22 and MassDOT approval 5/30/22.
- BSC Group has begun survey, wetland flagging, and bridge type selection worksheet tasks.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Brendan Callahan

Brendan Callahan, Assistant Director of Planning
 978-538-5780